

Lust for Accessories

By Crispin Sartwell
Capital Times Advisor

A New York Love Affair
Scene 3. Pursuit

She opens her leather agenda. To the date, that date, November Fifth. 730 Fifth Avenue. Ten p.m. circled in felt-tip pen. Under that, underlined, "espresso bar." Different pen, different handwriting.

Now she has all the information. Candace Bushnell for Bulgari. Advertisement in the New York Times.

Our love was forbidden, but that made it all the more fashionable. The insatiable lust that pulled us together kicking and screaming until we couldn't tell whose limbs were whose was based on three things. Caffeine. Bulgari accessories. And the fact that neither of us could write. A complete sentence.

He was the most beautiful man I had ever seen, but in my girlish heart I knew it was wrong, so wrong. He was married. A Franciscan monk. HIV positive. And only 12 years old.

I was working as a professor of pure mathematics at Columbia and moonlighting as a love slave at a mid-town bar.

We were so different. Yet we were the same too. Maybe it was the information in our Vulgari agendas. Maybe the leather. Maybe the diamond-encrusted felt-tip pen that he wielded like a rapier. I had one too.

Maybe the fact that we both swilled espresso until we lived twenty feet outside our own bodies and could not utter a single coherent. Phrase.

Maybe our lives were incredibly empty.

But for whatever reason, we pencilled each other in. Or perhaps our secretaries made the assignment. It's hard. To remember.

We came together that evening in the espresso bar like Antony and Cleopatra. Like a religious leader communing with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Like a tractor-trailer colliding with a Yugo. Like a felt-tip pen caressing an agenda. Like a sex columnist encountering a book. On grammar.

I remember most of all what he was wearing. He was so haute. Leather jeans. A ruby brooch that perfectly matched his corneas. An i.v. by Tommy Hilfiger. Jewel-en-

crusted latex.

It was enough to make any professor of pure mathematics melt into a puddle of womanly desire.

Our Orphan-Annie eyes met over the demitasse. Uninhabited eyes. Eyes like pools of impure possibility. Pools that could only be filled by continuous conspicuous consumption. Eyes that wanted. That silently begged "please, please." That saw only designer boutiques, platinum cards, and each other.

We had no desire to talk or even to touch. We wanted only to shop, and we shopped with orgiastic fury.

That night we bought things that it had never before occurred to anyone to want: fur toaster ovens; nose implants; cosmetics distilled from icebergs; smallpox; flawless appliances that did nothing at all; Elton John's tribute to Mobutu Sese Seko; full-body tattoos of the self-portraits of Frida Kahlo; computerized wigs; huge Eskimo girls; self-improvement books made of human skin; former Soviet republics. And still it was not enough.

We were living in a dream or perhaps nightmare of lust for accessories.

We took cabs. We looted. We smoked rock caffeine. We dodged the paparazzi. We wept together for the homeless.

Our passion was torrential, deranged, credit-worthy, postmodern as the next Calvin Klein campaign.

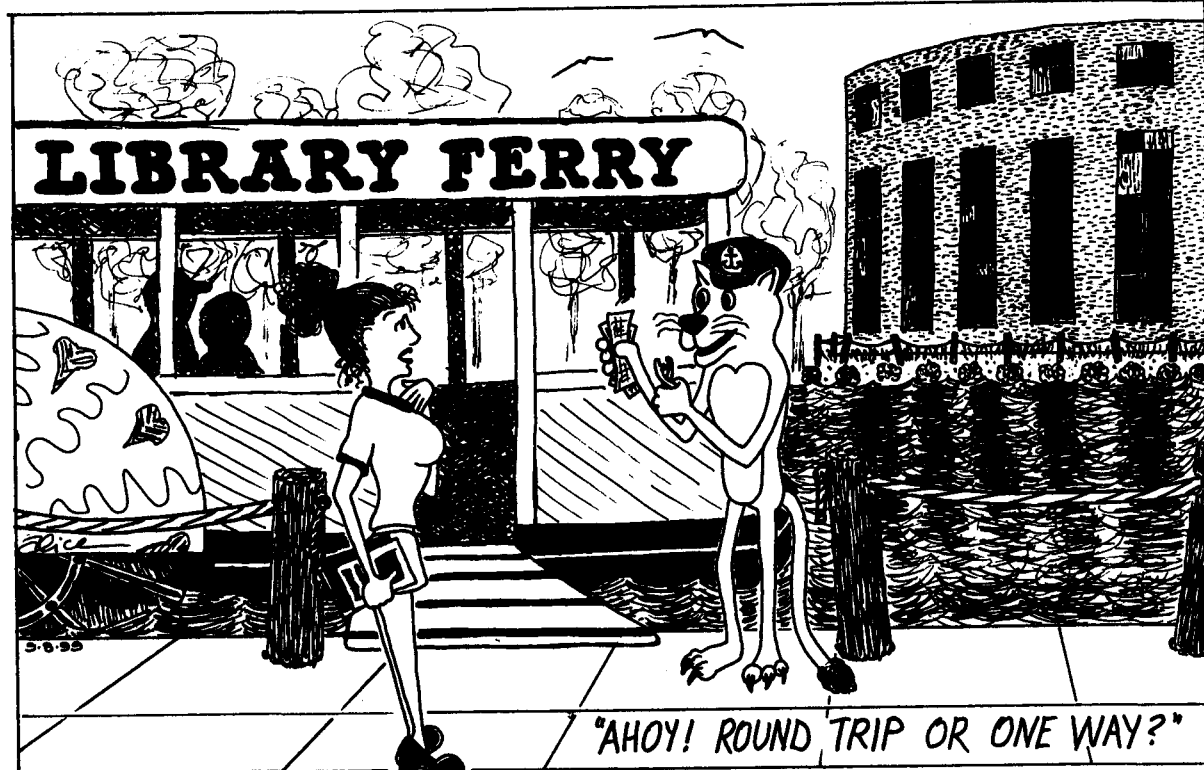
But it was over as quickly as it began. Over the next few moments, I noticed that we were drifting insensibly apart. Soon he was wearing Gucci and I, I was working on a proof of Fermat's last theorem.

His wife found out about our forbidden agenda. His home room teacher found out. God found out. The public health authorities found out.

Then came the fateful moment when one of my sentences featured a verb, and I knew that it was never to be.

I quit my jobs, traded my condo for a simple yet daringly bare Donna Karan burqa, and joined the Taliban.

But every time I open my agenda to the date, that date, I am reminded of the importance of effective accessorizing.



Millennium in Vegas

By Bryan Kapschull
Capital Times Staff Writer

When I was in fifth grade I made a bet with my best friend Wes. I bet him \$50 that the world would not end on New Years Eve 1999.

Being a sucker, he took the bet without realizing that if he won we would both be dead. He therefore would not receive his payment.

If you happen to run in to anyone in your travels who believes the world is coming to an end, ask them to put their money where their mouth is. Trust me, you can't lose. I only wish I had 'gambled' more than \$50, but in fifth grade, it seemed like a hell of a lot more money.

The recent media frenzy concerning Y2K has a rather considerable number of people looking to January 1 with apprehension.

Among these concerned citizens of earth is my grandmother. She hides in her basement every time there is a thunderstorm warning in the Western Hemisphere.

She possesses an omnipresent fear that hurricane Jimbob, or Susie, or Sammy is going to find its way to Pennsylvania from Florida, or Cuba, or China.

You can imagine my grandmother's terrifying vision of 11:59 p.m. December 31, 1999. Picture her along with the masses of other overly cautious families gathered around their shiny new Honda 75 horsepower gas powered generators.

The protective family men perched atop their Honda's with a hand on the pull cord like Quick Draw McGraw, just waiting for the lights to go out.

And when darkness falls on the rest of the unprepared neighborhood, a collective "I told you so" rings out from these basements of fortitude. This just before the rest of the neighborhood comes knocking on your door, making themselves at home among your stockpile.

You knew those 2,000 cans of creamed corn would come in handy, along with the crate of dehydrated H2O, your freeze dried sacks of air, your palate of Spam. If this sounds like an unpleasant scenario, I've got a solution for you.

I recently came to the conclusion that the only rational plan for the approaching millennium is to head to Las Vegas. The great neon oasis in the Nevada desert, name a better place to spend the eve of destruction.

It's always warm there, no worrying about losing your electric heat. Now, I do realize that every hotel room in the city is most likely booked for New Years by now, but I have an alternate plan.

The casinos never close so it is not entirely necessary that I sleep, no need for a hotel room. I'll bring enough Vivarin to stay awake for a week or two.

Recently I contacted Vivarin to

inquire if they might endorse my trip to Vegas. I explained to them that I could be Vivarin man and wear a yellow Vivarin suit, people could gather round me and watch me not sleep.

I could bring a sloth and feed it Vivarin and it could then run quickly down the strip on its hind legs. Unfortunately it specifies on the Vivarin package that the product is not intended to be used as a substitute for sleep.

I have yet to receive a reply from Vivarin concerning my proposition.

Isn't it a beautiful plan? The glowing lights, the warm desert air, the ringing of the slots, the crack heads, the prostitutes...and you?

I ask you to join me on my trip. I know, what if it really is the end and all those within the City of Sin are condemned to eternal damnation?

If worse comes to worse, I'll be on the highway to hell with Wayne Newton at my side.

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